

## UNDP IN JAMAICA

Despite critical challenges in stimulating investment and growth, overcoming fiscal constraints and managing the debt overhang, Jamaica has achieved a medium level of human development. It is on track in terms of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for poverty eradication and environmental sustainability, and has reached near universal enrolment in primary education. A number of concerns come from high rates of crime

and violence, however. The country is also vulnerable to natural disasters.

UNDP has made contributions in the areas of improved governance, poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS, and environmental sustainability and energy. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1997 to 2004.

### TOTAL PROGRAMME RESOURCES, 1997-2006: \$12.8 MILLION

#### FUNDING SOURCES, 1997-2003



#### PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY STRATEGIC GOAL, 1997-2003 (\$ MILLIONS)



## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP has supported national development results in Jamaica in a number of ways, such as through a significant contribution to the Local Government Reform programme, aimed at organizing grass-roots mechanisms to develop people's initiatives and secure their participation in national development. Under the Parish Infrastructure Development Programme, an approach termed "community engineering" was devised, based on best practices in local government. Pilot projects funded by UNDP established community structures to engage with relevant agencies involved in project implementation, and initiated and developed mechanisms for project identification, preparation and implementation in communities throughout Jamaica. The Local Initiative Facility for the Urban Environment also helped develop community participation, and established partnerships and resource mobilization for local initiatives.

Towards bolstering the public sector, UNDP focused on the capacities of the Office of Utilities Regulation, helping it to become more efficient in carrying out its responsibility as the national regulatory body for water service providers. An increase staff capacity was suggested by the demand for staff to provide training to similar organizations in the Caribbean region. Support for an information technology platform led to improved

capacity to deliver information to the public, as required by the newly promulgated Access to Information Act.

The United Nations Department of Political Affairs and UNDP responded to the Government's request for support to the electoral reform process, with the Electoral Advisory Committee engaging with UNDP to gain a "seal of approval" for electoral arrangements. The organization also contributed to strengthening the Office of the Political Ombudsman so it could effectively monitor elections and speedily resolve problems that arose.

Increased public debate on sustainable human development and human rights issues occurred through public awareness initiatives and policy dialogue. In 2000, Jamaica's first Human Development Report proved influential among policy makers, although it was unclear how much it contributed to broader public debate.

The recently launched Civic Dialogue for Democratic Governance Initiative is a major attempt by UNDP to foster social harmony and cohesion that has generated great interest. But it is too early to assess results, and government commitment to the process is unclear.

UNDP played a major role in helping the Government develop the National Poverty Eradication Programme, and worked with other UN agencies and organizations in formulating comprehensive strategies

on HIV/AIDS. A Leadership for Results Training Programme has helped generate regional networks to act on the pandemic. UNDP also assisted the Government in securing funding from the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS towards implementation of the National Strategic Plan.

In the area of environmental sustainability, UNDP helped Jamaica articulate national policies and clarify institutional roles. Plans and programmes for subsectors such as national forestry management, biodiversity protection, ocean and coastal zone management, early warning systems and disaster management were drawn up, and necessary legislation passed.

Despite its achievements, UNDP faces a number of key challenges in Jamaica, including an erosion of its partnership with the Government over time. This is due in part to limited resources and in part to different responses to national development priorities. Recent resource mobilization strategies and a focus on UNDP's comparative advantage have not had desired results. The office has been handicapped by a number of internal management problems, including a 70 percent turnover in national staff due to a reprofiling process.

Some programme management and design weak-

nesses need to be urgently addressed. For example, developing links between upstream policies and downstream initiatives has not received sufficient attention, nor have links between the three thematic areas, namely governance, poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. A results orientation is weak. Systematic monitoring and evaluation have been limited, and the capacity to learn lessons has suffered. Limited resources underscore the crucial importance of the sustainability of development interventions and the need for exit strategies.

In the context of limited resources, visibility for the work of the UN system as a whole and support for the achievement of the MDGs should receive higher priority. This can be enhanced through greater collaboration and joint programming, preferably making the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process more effective and meaningful.

The assessment of UNDP's strategic positioning in Jamaica indicates a number of opportunities to further explore. These should be examined in cooperation with national and international development partners. Further, UNDP needs to be flexible to react quickly to changing circumstances, including evolving aid relationships.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The national Civic Dialogue process shows great potential, but runs the risk of not meeting its objectives unless follow-up activities are carefully planned. An intensive engagement with the government should be expeditiously undertaken on benefits to be derived from the dialogue process.
- Opportunities for capacity-building, international contacts and resource mobilization should be more vigorously pursued in poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS, the environment and natural disaster management.
- UNDP should explore exploiting knowledge banks and innovative approaches to address priority issues in public-sector modernization and decentralization.
- Production integration on a regional basis is an area of strategic importance and could benefit from further support provided through UNDP regional programmes.
- The country programme should strengthen its focus on a number of key issues while remaining flexible enough to respond to priority government needs. UNDP needs to become more results oriented, and upgrade the knowledge of all staff in results-based management.
- UNDP should articulate a viable strategy for resource mobilization. At the same time, consideration should be given to sharpening the emphasis on coordination and strategic interventions.
- Strengthening the relationship with the Government, particularly in a period of resource scarcity, is a priority.
- Corporately, UNDP should delineate a new strategy on the nature of engagement in different categories of countries whose needs for technical cooperation may vary.
- Promoting human development aimed at easing the process of integration in the global economy is an area where UNDP should become even more proactive. UNDP should provide increased opportunities for a country to choose from a range of choices drawn from its global experience.
- A concerted effort should be made to ensure acceptance of the UNDAF as the common programming framework for the various organizations and agencies of the UN system.

## ABOUT THE ICPEs

Independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs) are the backbone of the work of the Independent Evaluation Office. They capture evidence of UNDP's contributions to development results and the effectiveness of strategies supporting national development. They enable continued improvement in UNDP programmes, contribute to strengthened national ownership and evaluation capacity, and underpin accountability to national stakeholders and UNDP's Executive Board. To date, over 100 ICPEs have been conducted worldwide.

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